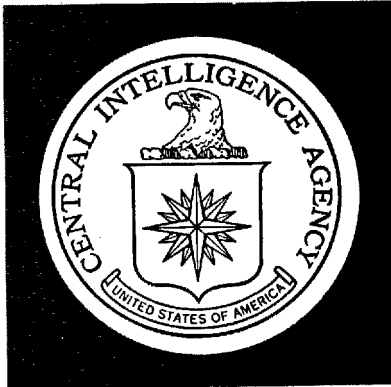


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Thailand: Growing apprehension about the steadfastness of the US commitment in Southeast Asia is causing some military leaders to question the wisdom of Thailand's present foreign and security policies.

[redacted]
[redacted] the top military leadership is taking a harder look at the prospects for a Vietnam settlement and its implications for Thailand. There is growing pessimism, generated at least in part by the cessation of bombing of North Vietnam, that a future settlement may not protect Thailand's security interests, particularly with respect to Laos.

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Thai skepticism about the value of the US commitment to Thailand goes back at least as far as the 1961-62 Laos crisis, but the Thai view the stakes as higher at this time. The prospect that their direct support for the US effort in Vietnam will increase rather than diminish Thai security problems--as Peking and Hanoi have constantly warned--has led many of the Thai leaders to cast about for some alternative.

[redacted] strategic planning now is based not only on the assumption that Thailand cannot depend on SEATO to counter Communist aggression, but that the US itself may withdraw from the area after a Vietnam settlement. Some of the leaders are even talking about the possibility of a detente with Peking to reduce the threat of Chinese Communist aggression.

So far this re-evaluation is not being conducted in any systematic way, in part because the Thai leadership is loath to face problems squarely and in part because the options are either unrealistic or unpalatable. [redacted]

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Guyana-Venezuela: A recent Venezuelan raid into Guyanese territory could bring the long-standing border dispute into Guyana's national election campaign. So far, news of the affair has been kept from the Guyanese public, as well as from some high officials. If it leaks out, however, pro-Communist opposition leader Cheddi Jagan will use it to support his claim that Burnham is not adequately protecting the borders. The Venezuelans have pulled back, but when Guyanese troops are no longer needed to maintain security during the election campaign, Guyana could decide to retaliate.

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